

Message Text

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42

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DRC-01 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 /142 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5365

INFO AMCONSUL MUNICH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CZ

SUBJ: POSSIBLE DETENTION OF LIBERAL WRITERS

1. EMBASSY WAS INFORMED BY RELIABLE SOURCE THAT WELL-KNOWN LIBERAL WRITER PAVEL KOHOUT WAS PICKED UP BY AUTHORITIES AT BEGINNING OF THIS WEEK. APPARENTLY KAHOUT BELIEVED HE MIGHT BE DETAINED AT LEAST OVERNIGHT; WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER HE WAS. WESTERN JOURNALISTS HAVE ALSO HEARD THAT WRITER LUDVIK VACULIK HAS BEEN PICKED UP, THAT HE MAY SHORTLY BE PLACED ON TRIAL, BUT ALSO THAT HE HAD BEEN OFFERED EXIT VISA.
2. SEPARATELY FROM ABOVE, EMBASSY HAS HEARD THAT WEST GERMAN CORRESPONDENT HANS PETER RIESE, WHOSE ACCREDITATION WAS RECENTLY TERMINATED BY CZECHS, WAS PERMITTED TO RETURN TO PRAGUE THREE WEEKS AGO TO WIND UP AFFAIRS BUT WAS DETAINED SEVERAL HOURS BY POLICE ON CHARGE OF HAVING PHOTOGRAPHED SECURITY AGENTS. (MAIN CHARGE AGAINST RIESE WAS THAT HE HAD ARRANGED TV FILM ABOUT LIBERAL WRITER OTA FILIP, BUT AS REPORTED IN PRAGUE 2271, HE WAS ALSO ACCUSED OF HAVING CONTACTS WITH KOHOUT AMONG OTHERS.)

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3. KOHOUT IS IN FACT REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN PICKED UP BY

POLICE SOMEWHAT EARIER AS WELL, AFTER RECENT INTERVIEW WITH HIM ON AUSTRIAN RADIO AND TV. YET ANOTHER REASON FOR REGIME TO FEEL KOHOUT AND VACULIK AS SPECIAL THORNS IN SIDE IS FACT THAT THEY ARE PROBABLY THE TWO LIBERAL WRITERS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA BEST KNOWN IN WEST; WORKS OF THEIRS HAVE APPEARED IN TRANSLATION THIS YEAR IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND, AND OTHER VERSIONS HAVE APPEARED IN GERMAN. FURTHER, INTERVIEWS WITH KOHOUT AND VACULIK WHICH HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF THE REGIME HAVE APPEARED IN THE WEST GERMAN AUSTRIAN, AND FRENCH PRESS IN RECENT MONTHS.

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